

3/29/60

Dear Anne,

You are kind and wonderful, and we thank you for the thoughtful and very useful gift, which I here use for the first time! Now I'm sorry I didn't inherit a lot more bond paper this size! We both thank you very much. I think my wife's face lit up more than mine when I opened the package, expectant as a Christmertime kid.

I am also hopeful that in the near future we will no longer have the need to operate our own "press". Those finks at Dell have offered a contract for WHITEWASH II and OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS (I think I'll subtitle this CIA and Conspiracy) or (Whitewash of the CIA). I have a contract for MANCHESTER MACHIAVELLI: THE UNINDENDER (or UNWANTED, or UNORDERED) UNOFFICIAL WHITEWASH, with Parallax, about as small as I am.

But what I want I still do not have: a house I can call my publisher, where I can have a good editor, to whom I can turn over a rough draft of a book, purge its contents from my mind, and get along with another until I have said what I want to say. Maybe that will yet come.

It has been harder on Lil, but hard on both, to press as we do. In the fast five weeks (to the day) I have written about 75,000 words of the New Orleans book, Lil has typed most of it, and I cannot tell you how many other things I have done, including the first 20m programs of a radio series to tell the story if WHITEWASH is in 39 weeks (ten per week @ 3 minutes each)! I have made not fewer than 30 radio broadcasts, all but one by phone, plus a syndicated taping, in this same time; travelled; and answered the few letters I have permitted myself to answer; and a little research. If the age didn't hang so heavily on the accumulating fat, I'd feel like a young man!

It is all such a challenge I exult in it, forgetting from time to time how awful it all is from the thrill and excitement of merely facing challenge and succeeding. And if you cannot, from time to time, get out of your mind what all of this really gets down to, you cannot work. There have been moments when I literally sickened as I got lost in the subject. Roberts, like the others, is finding a kind of success; but in doing it, after the one experience, he will not face me. He will not answer a challenge, and I make them them by radio and by mail. I shall eventually take from him what he allows to remain of a reputation. I tackled them all! If I do nothing else I will leave a record and each of these sycophants who seek wealth and position through their literary lickspittle, for at least the few moments it takes to read my letter, looks at himself and fears repetition of the experience! They have, if you will please excuse what I believe is an appropriate comparison, less conscience than a erect penis.

Things are changing. I get in not in my mail, which has never varied, but but in the reflection of the reporters on a personal level of beliefs and attitudes not in accord with what they write. They tell me nice things about myself, not what their papers print.

On the level of ordinary people there is also a change. There are several women who have volunteered to type for me. This would indeed be a boon if one were not 300 miles away and the over more than a thousand. But the offer means much. There is the working man who writes on a lined pad who insists I keep the occasional few dollars he sends and use them. When he would not accept them back I do use them for Xeroxing documents. There are the several radio reporters who have become investigators of sorts, who phone and interview people and tape the interviews. One of these may be of real significance. I cannot say more of it now. There is another than contains a confession of sorts, and it may be important. There are the growing number who phone in great indignation when they hear one of the sycophants on the air. I had three calls in two hours yesterday from a very conservative lady who was offended that Roberts got on the radio, more at this than the refusal of the station to air her call. And, not the least, there is your great kindness.

I think you know how much all these things mean to us, more than their measurable value.

Our own situation improves, despite the incredible dishonesty of the book business, a greater shock to me because of the special conception of books I have held since boyhood. We are almost out of debt and there is money due (overdue) us. We face the urgent need to relocate, which will also be costly, yet I have not a second to look for a place. There can be no financial profit for us, and that is the least important of the profits. We have gotten and are getting what counts. But eventually we shall have some cash for our own needs, and for my wife I look forward to this. I have allowed myself two luxuries: A decent radio so I can, in advance of my appearances, hear what some of the radio statisticians are airing before they phone me, and a good tape recorder, whose use is obvious. But I have not yet repaid a cent of the principal of the bank loan which among other things financed our car (which, since the loan, has accumulated 47,000 miles, mostly on this). If the deal with Dell on the New Orleans book jells, we'll have enough cash for a while. I think they are unprincipled enough to want to go through with their offer when they see the book, which says much more than they expect. I try and keep things in perspective, whether or not I succeed, and that entails the mention and in effect the denunciation of many people and things.

Well, you touched me, and you opened me, and I run on. Now I've got to get back to work. I hope to finish the draft in less than a week. It was due ten days ago but as I worked on it my understanding grew and with that the length. And I have worked Garrison's developments and contributions into it. I have been helping him, without getting into the papers in a cheap way on it.

Life has a way of working things out, sometimes right for those who see and understand what they see. The sordid commercialism with the Manchester book is so inappropriate. Poor man, he has no idea of the terrible thing he has done, the frightful national scandal he has, alone and unassisted, fashioned with his own little sick mind. But it is right that the papers make so clear how utterly cheap the whole thing is. I am impatient to address myself to him (2% done) and the return to WHITEWASH III, which I think will be extremely important, but in all of this I have found the patience that avoided me for 53 years. I have succeeded in organizing my efforts, without reopening the ulcer, so that I rarely waste a single inhalation. (I assure you, this letter is not a waste of time!)

"many thanks from us both, dear Anne. Sincerely,